GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2167
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2005
BAN ON COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES NEAR MANGROVE FOREST AREAS
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether mangrove forests protect the coastal areas and the river side areas from erosion and also protect the flora and fauna;

(b) If so, whether during the recent past mangroves have been degraded and dwindled;

(c) if so, the total area of mangroves and the percentage of decrease therein; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to protect mangroves?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) Mangroves do provide protection to coastal areas and their flora & fauna against erosion, cyclones, and tidal waves but the extent of protection is variable & is a function of several factors. Mangroves are not found along fresh water rivers as mangroves require an appropriate mixture of saline & freshwater, and soft substrate like mudflats to be able to grow and perpetuate.

(b) It is true that the mangroves have been under increasing biotic, and abiotic stresses during the recent past.

(c) As per the State of Forest Report 2003, brought out by the Forest Survey of India, the total mangrove area in the country is 4,461 kmÂ². The mangrove cover has shown a marginal net decrease of 21 kmÂ². The decrease is notional and is more of a correction resulting from an improved resolution of the satellite imagery and consequential more accurate interpretation.

(d) At present, the mangroves are protected through a range of regulatory measures like Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991; Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) studies under the EIA Notification, 1994 for specialized industries; monitoring of compliance, of conditions imposed while according Environmental Clearance, by Regional Offices of the Ministry and State Pollution Control Boards; enforcement of emission and effluent standards by industries and other entities, and recourse to legal action against the defaulters. Mangroves located within the notified forest areas are also covered under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.